

Rec'd PCT/PTO 05 OCT 2004

10/510380
PCT/EP03/02625



Europäisches
Patentamt

European
Patent Office

Office européen
des brevets

REC'D 15 MAY 2003

WIPO

PCT

Bescheinigung

Certificate

Attestation

Die angehefteten Unterla-
gen stimmen mit der
ursprünglich eingereichten
Fassung der auf dem näch-
sten Blatt bezeichneten
europäischen Patentanmel-
dung überein.

The attached documents
are exact copies of the
European patent application
described on the following
page, as originally filed.

Les documents fixés à
cette attestation sont
conformes à la version
initialement déposée de
la demande de brevet
européen spécifiée à la
page suivante.

Patentanmeldung Nr. Patent application No. Demande de brevet n°

02076376.9

**PRIORITY
DOCUMENT**
SUBMITTED OR TRANSMITTED IN
COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 17.1(a) OR (b)

Der Präsident des Europäischen Patentamts;
Im Auftrag

For the President of the European Patent Office

Le Président de l'Office européen des brevets
p.o.

R C van Dijk



PCT/EP03/02625

Anmeldung Nr:
Application no.: 02076376.9
Demande no:

Anmeldetag:
Date of filing: 09.04.02
Date de dépôt:

Anmelder/Applicant(s)/Demandeur(s):

UNILEVER N.V.
Weena 455
3013 AL Rotterdam
PAYS-BAS

Bezeichnung der Erfindung/Title of the invention/Titre de l'invention:
(Falls die Bezeichnung der Erfindung nicht angegeben ist, siehe Beschreibung.
If no title is shown please refer to the description.
Si aucun titre n'est indiqué se référer à la description.)

In Anspruch genommene Priorität(en) / Priority(ies) claimed /Priorité(s)
revendiquée(s)
Staat/Tag/Aktenzeichen/State/Date/File no./Pays/Date/Numéro de dépôt:

Internationale Patentklassifikation/International Patent Classification/
Classification internationale des brevets:

A23D/

Am Anmeldetag benannte Vertragstaaten/Contracting states designated at date of
filing/Etats contractants désignées lors du dépôt:

AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU MC NL PT SE TR

5

TRIGLYCERIDE FAT

10

Field of the invention

The present invention deals with a solid triglyceride fat which is suited to be used as hardstock fat for the preparation of emulsion spreads and with a process for the preparation of such fat.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION20 The related art

Margarine is an edible emulsion spread consisting of a continuous fat phase and an aqueous phase which is dispersed as fine droplets in the fat phase. The fat phase of margarine and of similar fat continuous emulsion spreads is a mixture of a fat which is fully liquid (the oil part of the fat phase) and a fat which is solid at ambient temperature.

For imparting to common margarine a semi-solid, plastic, spreadable consistency this stabilizing and structuring hardstock functionality plays an important role. The crystals of the solid fat denoted as hardstock fat, form a network throughout the liquid oil resulting into a structured fat phase. It also helps to stabilize the emulsion. Because the aqueous phase droplets are fixed within the spaces of the

lattice of solid fat crystals, coalescence of the droplets and separation of the heavier aqueous phase from the fat phase is prevented.

5 The technology of spread processing is well established. The type of fat and the ratio of liquid oil and solid fat are chosen such that after proper processing of the fat blend with an aqueous phase a plastic product with a suitable consistency and mouthfeel is obtained.

10

Unprocessed liquid vegetable oils are the major ingredient in the composition of margarine fats. Vegetable fats are preferred over animal fats because their high content of unsaturated fatty acid residues enhances the spread's nutritional value.

15 Besides that, vegetable fats are an abundant and relatively cheap resource.

According to the state of the art, the proper functionality of hardstock fats is obtained by subjecting a vegetable fat to a more or less complex process comprising treatments such as
20 blending, fractionation, hydrogenation and interesterification.

Admixing a hardstock fat to a liquid oil aims at obtaining such fat phase that after emulsifying with an aqueous phase and proper cooling and working, a semi-solid, plastic W/O-emulsion
25 results which is easily spreadable, stable at ambient temperatures and which when swallowed gives a pleasant sensory sensation (mouthfeel). The mouthfeel is the overall perception of quick fat melting and the taste of the aqueous phase which is released during mastication.

30

It is known that the presence of HMM and HHM triglycerides contributes to a good mouthfeel. H and M denote the fatty acid residues attached to the glyceride backbone, where H means a

saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length larger than 15 carbon atoms and M means a saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length of either 12 or 14 carbon atoms placed either in the middle or one of the terminal positions.

5

Generally, hardstock fats fail to conserve a proper spread consistency when ambient temperatures rise above average. Relying on a higher melting hardstock fat is at variance with the desire of a good oral melt. A waxy mouthfeel is the
10 consequence which is ascribed to the presence of the high melting HHH triglycerides.

The present invention addresses the desire to combine a good oral melt with good consistency even at high ambient
15 temperatures. Particularly at low fat levels such combination could not have been realised.

A good heat stability is shown by the spreads described in EP 0470658. The fat phase contains 6 wt.% of a single fat, fully hydrogenated palm oil or fish oil as hardstock fat. Nearly 6
20 wt.% of the fat phase necessarily consists of HHH triglycerides. Consequently the resulting spreads show a waxy mouthfeel.

To the contrary a good mouthfeel is reported for the spreads
25 obtained with the fat phase as described in e.g. EP 0089082 which discloses fats with a high content of HMH and HHM triglycerides. Spreads containing such fats are known to be not stable at high ambient temperatures.

The stability problem becomes particularly serious when the fat
30 content of a W/O-spread drops below 55 wt.% and particularly below 40 wt.%. Ordinary hardstock fats increasingly fail to provide heat stability without sacrificing acceptable mouthfeel.

The challenge to comply with the requirements of both good heat stability and quick mouth melting has triggered investigations which have resulted in the present invention.

5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

We have found a fat as defined in claim 1 which when used as a
10 fat phase for low fat spread manufacture possesses unique properties.

The fat can be easily prepared by merely admixing two fats A and B each with a specific triglyceride composition in a ratio chosen from a specific range as specified in claim 2.

15 Spreads in which the fat is employed as fat phase surprisingly combine heat stability with good mouthfeel.

20

DETAILS OF THE INVENTION

The present fat is characterized by the presence of two types of triglycerides HHH and H2M (HHM and HMH) which fat shows the found beneficial properties provided the conditions as
25 specified in claim 1 are met.

Such fats preferably are prepared by the process as specified in claim 2. The process merely consists of incorporating in a triglyceride oil a fat A and a fat B in an A/B ratio of 1/9 to
30 4/6.

Fat A must consist for at least 50 wt.% of fully saturated triglycerides and moreover the fatty acid residues constituting those triglycerides must for at least 80 wt.% consist of

palmitic acid and stearic acid residues, while the content of lauric acid should not exceed 5 wt.%.

Fat B must consist for at least 20 wt.%, preferably at least 25 wt.% of H2M triglycerides.

5

Fats A and B are not necessarily novel. They may be chosen from prior art fats which comply with the claimed triglyceride specification.

For processing of edible fats hydrogenation preferably is
10 avoided presently. The naturalness trend dictates the interesterification to be carried out preferably enzymatically, while fractionation preferably is dry fractionation without use of solvents.

15 Fat A suitably is fully hydrogenated palm oil. Preferably fat A is prepared without use of hydrogenation. A more natural process relies on interesterification and fractionation. A fat is selected which has a high natural content of stearic acid (>20 wt.%) and a fat with a high natural content of palmitic
20 acid (>20 wt.%). Fats with a high content of stearic acid (S) comprise shea fat, Allanblackia fat and the developed high stearic variants of soybean oil, rapeseed oil and sunflower oil. Fats with a high content of palmitic acid (P) comprise palm oil and cottonseed oil. A high stearic fat and a high
25 palmitic fat are blended in such ratio that the blend complies with the P/S ratio of claim 2. The blend is subjected to interesterification and then to fractionation. The skilled man knows to choose fractionation conditions so that the collected stearin complies with the specifications of claim 2.

30

Alternatively the high S fat and/or the high P fat to be used for the preparation of fat A are first fractionated to increase the contents of S and P further. The collected stearins are

interesterified and, optionally, thereafter fractionated so that the HHH content of the collected fat complies with the specifications of claim 2.

- 5 Either route delivers a fat of which the triglyceride composition provides a hardstock functionality which is similar to that of PO58.

10 Examples of suitable non-hydrogenated fats B are found among the interesterified mixtures of palm oil with either palm kernel oil or coconut oil. Optionally fractions of those oils can be used. Preferably the interesterified mixture (62/38) of palm oil stearin and palm kernel oil is used.

- 15 Particularly at ambient temperatures of 25°C or more the combined presence of fats A and B - in contrast to traditional hardstock fats - shows an ability to ensure heat stability of a spread, which ability becomes more pronounced when the fat content of the spread drops below 50 wt.% or even below 40
20 wt.%.

This functionality is obtained with a relatively low SAFA contribution not exceeding 13 wt.% on total fat blend. So the total SAFA content of the spread's fat phase can be kept below 25 wt.% and in special cases even below 20 wt.%.

- 25 Without wishing to be bound by theory we believe that the beneficial combination of heat stability and good oral perception is based on the special structure of fine crystals which crystal structure is induced by the combined presence of
30 specific HHH triglycerides with a mixed fatty acids composition and specific H2M triglycerides of which the molecules contain H-residues which are much less mixed. The fatty acid residues

(H) of the H2M triglycerides consist predominantly - more than 65 wt%, preferably more than 75 wt% - of palmitic acid.

These two specific triglyceride groups, HHH and H2M, essentially have to be derived from the separate blend fats
5 each of which is contributing a unique H-residues composition.

The described fat phase can be used for the manufacture of fat continuous emulsion spreads which form part of the invention.

- 10 A spread manufacturing process comprises the steps
- emulsifying 50-80 wt.% of an aqueous phase with 20-50 wt.% of a fat phase and
 - cooling and working the emulsion to obtain a spreadable emulsion,
- 15 characterized in that a fat phase is used according to the present invention.

The liquid oil part of the fat phase can be any commodity oil generally used for spread manufacture such as rapeseed oil,
20 sunflower oil, soybean oil and mixtures of such oils.

The final fat phase preferably contains 6 - 15 wt.% of the added amounts of fats A and B. For nutritional (low SAFA content) and cost reasons preferably the lower amounts of the
25 range are chosen.

Although the spreads of the invention are said to be prepared with a vegetable fat phase, the invention also comprises spreads where a part of the fat phase has been substituted by
30 dairy fat.

The aqueous phase may contain the usual spread ingredients such as water, one or more emulsifiers, gelling and/or thickening

agents, salt, colouring agent, flavour, a preservation agent and dairy proteins.

The aqueous phase may also contain a dispersed fat phase so that eventually an O/W/O-emulsion would result which is a
5 subspecies of the spreads according to the present invention.

For the preparation of the spread use is made of common spread manufacturing technology:

The aqueous phase and the fat phase are prepared by mixing the
10 respective ingredients. Then both phases are emulsified. The crude pre-emulsion is subjected to the usual cooling and working treatments employing scraped surface heat exchangers and pin stirrers so that eventually a plastic spread product is obtained.

15 Such process employs established technology well known to the man skilled in the art. Details can be found in various textbooks such as K.A. Alexandersen, Margarine Processing Plants and Equipment (Vol.4, Bailey's Industrial Oil and Fat Products, Wiley and Sons Inc., New York 1996).

20

Preferably the invented spread is prepared with only natural ingredients.

Preferably the content of saturated fatty acids in the spread
25 of the invention is less than 25 wt.%, preferably less than 20 wt.% on total fat phase.

The following examples illustrate the invention.

30

Example 1

The 40% fat W/O-spreads A, B and C have been prepared starting from a pre-mix of which the fat phases A, B and C had the composition according to Table I.

5

TABLE I

| Fat phase | A | B (comparison) | C (comparison) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Fat phase components | | | |
| Liquid oil | 89% rapeseed oil | 89% rapeseed oil | 87% rapeseed oil |
| Structuring fat | | | |
| | 2% PO58 (2) | | 4% POs (4) |
| | 9% fat B (1) | | 9% fat B (1) |
| | | 11% in(fhPK/fhPO) (3) | |
| Fat phase composition in wt. % | | | |
| Saturated fatty acids | 15.8 | 17.0 | 16.4 |
| Total HHH | 3.4 | 2.0 | 3.3 |
| PPP | 1.49 | 0.17 | 2.66 |
| SSS | 0.22 | 0.36 | Traces |
| Monoacid TG | 50% of HHH | 27% of HHH | 80% of HHH * |
| PSP | 0.72 | 0.21 | 0.19 |
| PPS | 0.32 | 0.43 | 0.45 |
| PSS | 0.76 | 0.55 | Traces |
| SPS | traces | 0.28 | Traces |
| H2M | | | |
| HHM | 1.6 | 2.53 | 1.6 |
| HMH | 0.8 | 1.27 | 0.8 |
| H in H2M | | | |
| P | 93.4 | 40.8 * | 93.4 |
| S | 6.3 | 58.9 | 6.3 |
| A | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |

* Outside claim specification

(1) Fat B is a chemically interesterified blend of
 10 38 wt.parts of palm kernel fat and
 62 wt.parts of dry fractionated palm oil stearin (slip m.p.
 56°C).

(2) PO58: fully hydrogenated palm oil (slip m.p. 58°C)

- (3) A common chemically interesterified blend of 57 wt.parts of fully hydrogenated palm kernel fat and 43 wt.parts of fully hydrogenated palm oil (slip m.p. 58°C).
 (4) Dry fractionated palm oil stearin (slip m.p. 56°C).

5

The pre-mix had the following composition

| Pre-mix | wt. % |
|--------------|-------|
| Fat phase | 40 |
| Bolec ZT | 0.32 |
| Hymono 8903 | 0.3 |
| Flavour | trace |
| B-carotene | 0.048 |
| Water | 58.6 |
| K-sorbate | 0.073 |
| Whey protein | 0.55 |
| Salt | 0.1 |
| Citric acid | 0.05 |
| End pH | 4.6 |

10

The ingredients mixture was stored at 60°C prior to processing. After addition of the monoglyceride, salt and flavour, the premix was processed at a throughput of 80 kg/hour through a traditional A-A-A-C sequence of scraped surface heat exchangers (A-units) and a crystallizer (pin stirrer or C-unit). The speed of the A-units was set to 900 rpm, the speed of the C-unit (1.5 l volume) was 1200 rpm. The exit temperature of the last A-unit was approximately 7°C and the exit temperature of the C-unit was approximately 13°C. The processed spread was filled into 20 250g plastic tubs and stored at 15°C for one week.

Then one part of the tubs was exposed to 20°C and the other part to 25°C. After one day storage at 25°C an expert panel (n=6) assessed the spreads A, B and C, prepared with fat phases A, B and C respectively, on heat stability. After subsequent 5 storage for one day at 10°C these were assessed on spreadability and mouthfeel.

When judging mouthfeel a combination of melting sensation, flavour perception and salt release was rated. The assessment 10 also included the persistence of a waxy mouthfeel that remains after swallowing the spread.

For spreadability rating it is assessed how smoothly the margarine is spread on a standard surface (waxed paper) and 15 whether the resulting layer has an appealing appearance. Table II shows the assessment ratings on a 1-5 scale (5 being the best).

TABLE II

20

| Quality assessment | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Spread | A | B (comparison) | C (comparison) |
| Mouthfeel | 4 | 4.5 | 3 |
| Spreadability | 4.5 | 3.5 | 2.5 |
| Heat stability | No phase separation | Slight oil separation at 25°C | Serious oil separation at 25°C |

The stability of the products against structure desintegration 25 on temperature stress was evaluated through exposure of the sample to 20°C and 25°C for 24 hours. See Table II.

Spread A withstood the high ambient temperature without any sign of losing water or layering of oil. Spread B showed an

thin layer of oil at 25 C. Comparison spread C, however, showed an unacceptable layer of oil at 25°C.

The assessment of the three spreads clearly showed that a 40% fat spread prepared according to the invention when assessed on temperature stability, oral perception and (low) saturated fat content scored better in comparison with a spread according to the nearest prior art.

10

Example 2

The 38% fat spreads D and E were prepared according to the procedure of example 1 with the differences that the aqueous phase of the product was stabilized by 1 wt.% (on spread) of gelatine and only 38 wt.% of fat phase was used.

The spreads contained the fat phases D and E resp. as specified in Table III.

Both spreads D and E were found to be stable against phase separation when exposed to the elevated temperatures as described in example 1. However, in terms of mouthfeel, spread D significantly outperformed the spread manufactured with fat phase E. The latter spread not only suffered from a waxy mouthfeel after consumption, it lacked any oral melting sensation. Also the flavour release was not acceptable when compared with spread D according to the invention.

30

TABLE III

| Fat phase | D | E (comparison) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Liquid oil | 89 % Rapeseed oil | 92 % Rapeseed oil |
| Structuring fat | | 8% PO58 (1) |
| | 4% stearin fat (2) | |
| | 9% fat B (3) | |
| Fat phase composition in wt. % | | |
| Saturated fatty acids | 16.6 | 14.3 |
| Total HHH | 3.9 | 7.8 |
| PPP | 1.7 | 0.53 |
| SSS | 0.21 | 0.89 |
| Monoacid TG | 49% | 18% * |
| PSP | 0.45 | 2.54 |
| PPS | 0.74 | 0.63 |
| PSS | 0.54 | 3.0 |
| SPS | 0.25 | 0.19 |
| H2M | | |
| HHM | 1.53 | 0.17 * |
| HMH | 0.76 | 0.08 * |
| H in H2M | | |
| P | 93.4 | 44.9 |
| S | 6.3 | 55.0 |
| A | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Spread quality assessment | | |
| Heat stability 25°C | Good | Good |
| Oral melt | Fine | Absent |
| Waxy mouthfeel | Absent | Persistent |
| Flavour release | Good | Not satisfactory |

* Outside claim specification

(1) PO58: fully hydrogenated palm oil

(2) The stearin fat is prepared by (chemical)

5 interesterification of 50 wt.parts of palm oil with 50 wt.parts of sheanut butter. The product is subsequently fractionated at such temperature that solely HHH triglycerides crystallise.

(3) Fat B is a chemically interesterified blend of

38 wt.parts of palm kernel fat and

10 62 wt.parts of dry fractionated palm oil stearin (slip m.p.56°C).

AHS

09 04. 2002

CLAIMS

(44)

1. A fat comprising a mixture of triglycerides, characterised in that
 - 2.5 to 5.5 wt.% of the triglycerides are HHH triglycerides,
 - 25 to 65 wt.%, preferably 25 to 55 wt.% of the HHH triglycerides are monoacid triglycerides and the remaining HHH triglycerides consist of mixed fatty acid residues,
 - 1.5 to 5 wt.% of the triglycerides are HHM and HMH triglycerides,
 - at least 85 wt.% of the fatty acid residues H in HHM and HMH are palmitic acid residues,where H means a saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length larger than 15 carbon atoms and M means a saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length of either 12 or 14 carbon atoms placed either in the middle or in one of the terminal positions.
2. A process suited for the preparation of the triglyceride fat according to claim 1, comprising incorporating in a triglyceride oil a fat A and a fat B in an A/B ratio of 1/9 to 4/6, characterized in that of fat A
 - at least 50 wt.% of the triglycerides are fully saturated
 - at least 80 wt.% of the constituting saturated fatty acid residues have a chain length of 16 carbon atoms (P) or 18 carbon atoms (S), the ratio P:S being in the range 75:25 - 25:75,
 - up to 5 wt.% of the saturated fatty acid residues have a chain length of 12 or 14 carbon atomsand in that of fat B
 - at least 20 wt.%, preferably at least 25 wt.% of the

triglycerides consist of HHM and HMH triglycerides in which H and M are as defined in claim 1.

3. Process according to claim 2, characterized in that fat A is obtained by
 1. Selecting a fat which contains >20 wt.% of stearic acid and a fat which contains >20 wt.% of palmitic acid,
 2. Blending both fats in such ratio that the blend complies with the P/S ratio of claim 2,
 3. Subjecting the blend to interesterification,
 4. Subjecting the interesterified fat to fractionation under such conditions that the collected stearin complies with the fat A specifications of claim 2.
4. Process according to claim 2, characterized in that fat A is obtained by
 1. Selecting a fat which contains >20 wt.% of stearic acid and a fat which contains >20 wt.% of palmitic acid,
 2. Fractionating the high stearin fat and/or the high palmitic fat,
 3. Interesterifying the high stearin fat and the high palmitic fat, at least one of these being a fractionated fat,
 4. Optionally, fractionating the interesterified fat, the fractionation conditions of step 2 and step 4 being chosen such that the stearin collected after step 4 complies with the fat A specifications of claim 2.
5. Process according to claim 2, where fat B is chosen such that the weight ratio of oleic acid and linoleic acid residues is more than 3.

6. Process according to any one of the previous claims, where for fats A and B non-hydrogenated fats are chosen.
7. Process according to any one of the previous claims, where for fats A and B enzymatically interesterified fats are chosen.
8. Process according to any one of the previous claims, where fats A and B have been obtained without the use of wet fractionation
9. Process for the preparation of an edible W/O emulsion spread comprising the steps
 - emulsifying 50-80 wt.% of an aqueous phase with 20-50 wt.% of a fat phase and
 - cooling and working the emulsion to obtain a spreadable emulsion,characterized in that a fat phase is used as specified in claim 1.
10. Process according to the previous claim, characterized in that the emulsion is prepared with 60-80 wt.% of an aqueous phase and 20-40 wt.% of a fat phase, preferably with 60-70 wt.% of an aqueous phase and 30-40 wt.% of a fat phase.
11. Spread obtained according to claims 9 or 10, characterized in that the content of saturated fatty acids on total fat phase is less than 25 wt.%, preferably less than 20 wt.%.

09 04 2002

(44)

ABSTRACT

A fat suited as fat phase for spread manufacture comprising a mixture of triglycerides, in which

- 2.5 to 5.5 wt.% of the triglycerides are HHH triglycerides,
- 25 to 65 wt.%, preferably 25 to 55 wt.% of the HHH triglycerides are monoacid triglycerides and the remaining HHH triglycerides consist of mixed fatty acid residues,
- 1.5 to 5 wt.% of the triglycerides are HHM and HMH triglycerides,
- at least 85 wt.% of the fatty acid residues H in HHM and HMH are palmitic acid residues,

where H means a saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length larger than 15 carbon atoms and M means a saturated fatty acid residue having a chain length of either 12 or 14 carbon atoms placed either in the middle or in one of the terminal positions.

Such fat phase can be obtained by incorporating in a triglyceride oil a fat A and a fat B in an A/B ratio of 1/9 to 4/6, characterized in that of fat A

- at least 50 wt.% of the triglycerides are fully saturated
- at least 80 wt.% of the constituting saturated fatty acid residues have a chain length of 16 carbon atoms (P) or 18 carbon atoms (S), the ratio P:S being in the range 75:25 - 25:75,
- up to 5 wt.% of the saturated fatty acid residues have a chain length of 12 or 14 carbon atoms and in that of fat B
- at least 20 wt.%, preferably at least 25 wt.% of the triglycerides consist of HHM and HMH triglycerides.